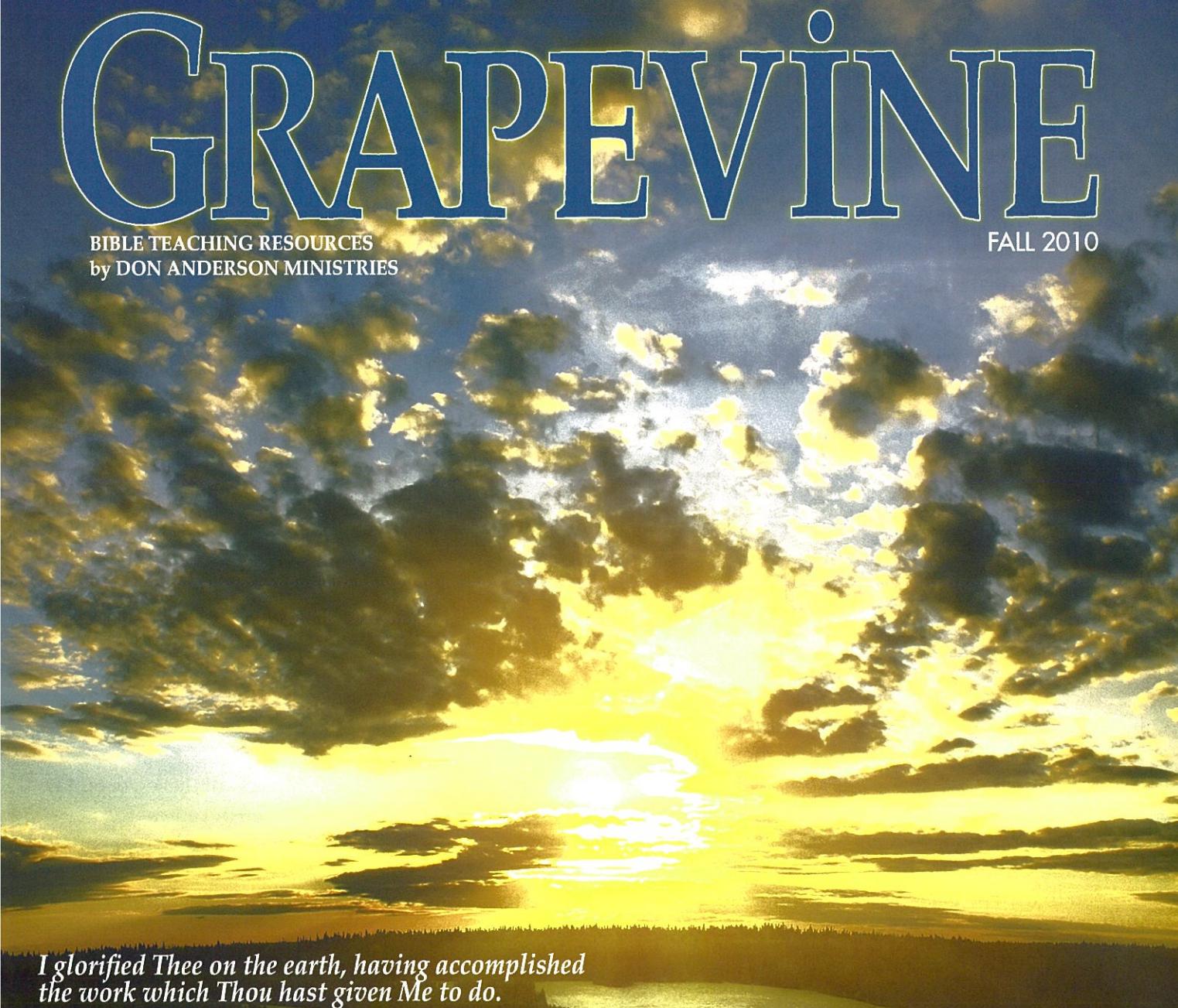


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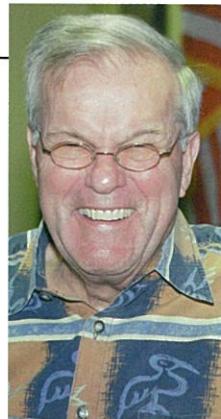
BIBLE TEACHING RESOURCES
by DON ANDERSON MINISTRIES

FALL 2010



*I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished
the work which Thou hast given Me to do.*

— John 17:4 NASB



Prepare for Immediate Departure

Prepare your heart for your departure. If you are wise, you will expect it every hour.

Saint Isaac the Syrian,
seventh century mystic

"So teach us to consider our mortality, so that we might live wisely" (Psalm 90:12 Net).

These past few months of ministry have been filled with final goodbyes to many of our friends who have made their journeys to glory.

When confronted with the reality of physical death, we sometimes retain a deep feeling in our hearts that we are immortal and that death will never happen to us. The *Daily Walk Bible* offers food for thought: "When you are God's person, in God's will, you are immortal until God is finished with you."

Still...there will come a time for each of us when we will be called home to glory. The question is, how can we, with dignity and victory, be those who experience the joy of finishing well?

A recent letter from Billy Graham contained the following paragraph, which blessed me so much:

In recent months I have felt a growing desire to preach in person again, even if just one more time. It may not be possible with my health, but I have begun preparing a message should God give me strength and opportunity. Meanwhile today, approaching age 92, my main personal ministry is prayer.

Howard Hendricks sent this letter almost ten years ago. In it we find how to make our final opportunity for witness a victorious one:

It's been 50 years now since God transplanted

"These past few months of ministry have been filled with final goodbyes to many of our friends who have made their journeys to glory."

me from the pulpit to the classroom, and I have the urge to pass along a few keys to making it all worthwhile and fulfilling. I think they are ripe for sharing, so let me start with the foundation of them all . . . FOCUS . . .

Jesus told Martha that . . . *only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her* (Luke 10:42). That tells me that I have to make tough choices. So many "goods" and "bettters" have to be discarded in favor of the *one thing* . . .

If anything has kept me on track all these years, it's been skewered to this principle of central focus. You might remember my inverted triangle; there are many things I can do (and you can especially), but I have to narrow it down to the *one thing I must* do. The secret of concentration is elimination. . . it's an A-1 priority. Keep your eye on the target.

Focused on Christ,
Howard G. Hendricks

Scripture reveals that Jesus, Paul, and Peter were all aware that their ground time on planet earth would be brief.

John 13:1: "Just before the Passover feast, Jesus knew that his time had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now loved them to the very end" (Net).

Paul to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:6: "For I am already being poured out as an offering, and the time for me to depart is at hand" (Net).

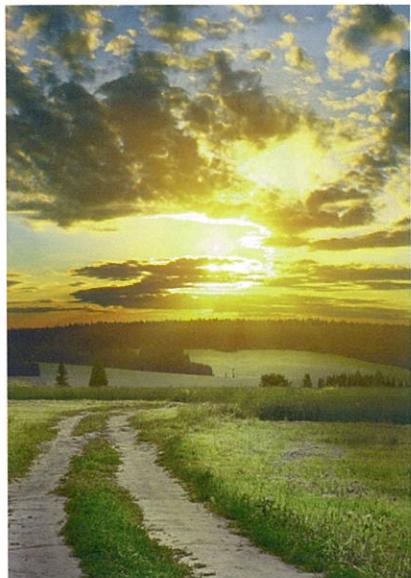
Peter in 2 Peter 1:14: "since I know that my tabernacle will soon be removed, because our Lord Jesus Christ revealed this to me. Indeed, I will also make every effort that, after my departure, you have

continued on page 13

GRAPEVINE

FALL 2010

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From the Editor

As Christians, we are called to serve the “least of these” in our culture and thus honor God. In this *Grapevine*, we profile Ron Hall, who has devoted his life to doing just that. With Denver Moore, Ron co-authored the books *Same Kind of Different As Me* and *What Difference Do It Make?* Ron and Denver’s story is one of an unlikely friendship inspired by a remarkable woman, Debbie Hall, Ron’s wife. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 664,414 sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons were counted nationwide on a single night in January 2008. HUD also reports that some 1.6 million persons used an emergency shelter or a transitional housing program during the 12-month period between October 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008. In other words, one out of every 190 persons in the U.S. used the shelter system at some point during this period. The homeless we indeed have with us. Ron has chosen to champion these people, honoring his wife’s legacy as he does so. As Don reveals in Clipboard, the “one thing” for BTR involves continuing to teach God’s word. Be sure to check out the updates on our webcast ministry which facilitates just that. What is the “one thing” or main focus for you? May God bless you as you seek His will for your life. Thank you for your continued friendship, prayers, and support.

—M. Jane Rodgers



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P.O. Box 6611
Tyler, TX 75711-6611
email: Dam@BibleTeachingResources.org
website: www.BibleTeachingResources.org
903.939.1201
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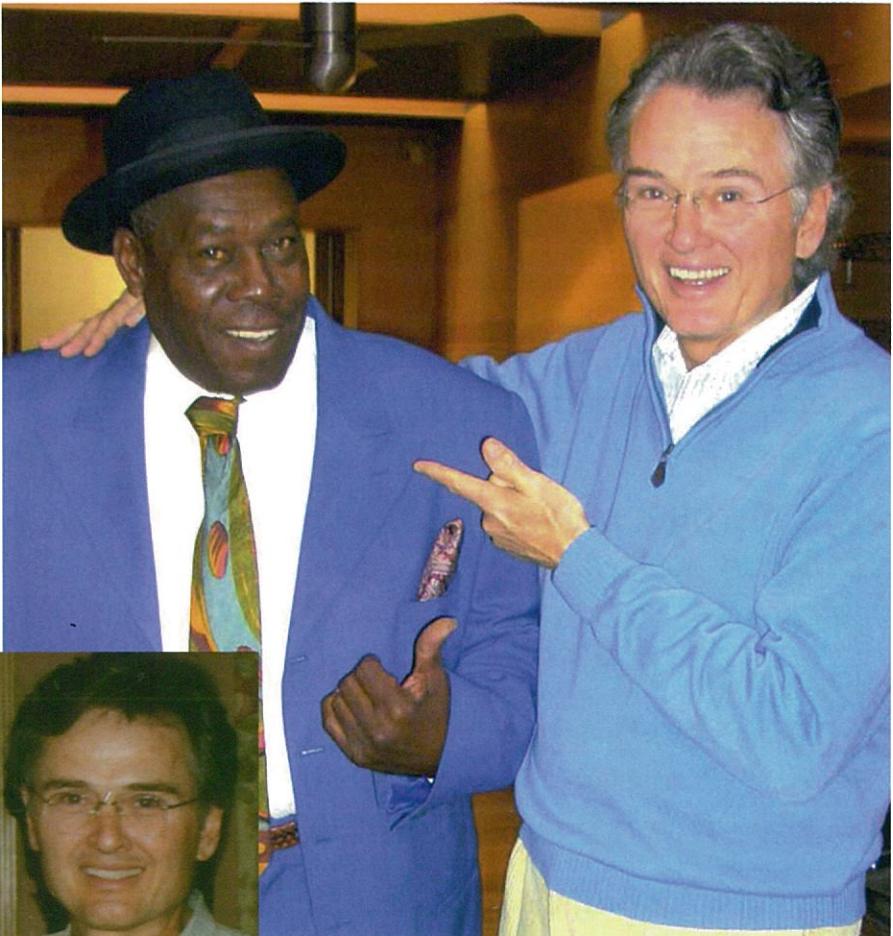


Editor: M. Jane Rodgers
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Q & A with Ron of *Same Kind of*

If you are one of the few people on the planet not to have read *Same Kind of Different As Me*, no worries. It's not too late to grab a copy. The book has been on the *New York Times* nonfiction bestseller list since it came out in paperback in 2008 (at this writing, 132+ consecutive weeks, a record for publisher Thomas Nelson). It's an unlikely story—the stuff of Lifetime movies and HBO specials. A beautiful, winsome, energetic, godly woman serves the homeless in a major Texas city. She encourages her husband, who heretofore has been ultra-busy with a high profile career as an art dealer, to accompany her to Fort Worth's Union Gospel Mission. He does so because he loves her and wishes to please her; their marriage has recovered from an earlier crisis. The two become regulars at UGM on Tuesday evenings, dishing up food at the mission—people there call them "Mr. and Mrs. Tuesday." It would be enough for most folks. It's not enough for Deborah Hall. She believes God gives her the vision that the mission will be transformed; at the heart of this transformation



will be a man such as Solomon mentions in Ecclesiastes—a "wise man who changes the city." She does not know who he is. One Tuesday as the Halls are serving food, a ferocious black man violently hurls curses and chairs across the mission dining hall, threatening to kill 20 people. As this man is subdued and led away. Deborah turns to Ron, with these words: "That's him. I think you should try to make friends with him" (89). Thus the story begins.

Ron Hall and Denver Moore do become the best of friends—brothers in

Hall Different As Me

by Jane Rodgers

fact, cemented by the bonds of Christ and their mutual affection for Deborah, who soon finds that she is terminally ill. *Same Kind of Different As Me* chronicles Ron, Denver, and Debbie's growing relationship and Debbie's battle against colon cancer. You'll need Kleenex, lots of them. The story is ultimately one of God's grace...of the unlikely pairing of a homeless man—the quintessential have-not—with a wealthy, educated businessman with residences in the city and a ranch on the Brazos river. It is the story of a remarkable woman whose legacy lives on through the pages of the book and through the memories of all who knew her (for to know Debbie was to love her). Ron and Denver alternate telling their stories—offering distinct perspectives on the events of their lives: meeting "Miss Debbie," celebrating Denver's first real birthday party, losing Miss Debbie. There are hilarious moments such as when Debbie corrals Denver and drags him to a church women's retreat. Other moments are more poignant—for example, when Ron and Denver return to Louisiana to face down the ghosts of Denver's traumatic youth. And there are heart wrenchingly painful moments--especially when Deborah loses her gallant battle with cancer and slips into the arms of the heavenly Father. Christ transforms Denver and Ron in all and through all.

After Deborah's homegoing, Ron asks Denver to live in a guest house on the same property. The friendship continues to grow and Denver becomes family to the Halls, a "second grandfather" to Ron's grandchildren. Denver preaches in local churches and volunteers at the Union Gospel Mission. He becomes an artist. Together, they work on this book, published in 2006. Response is overwhelming, and the two start traveling and speaking on behalf of the homeless. Fundraisers, television shows...even a movie deal follow. The rest is history still being made.

Don't buy the book if you are looking for a traditional gospel presentation and Christian platitudes...this is no formulaic pray the prayer of salvation and life will be okay story. Do buy the book

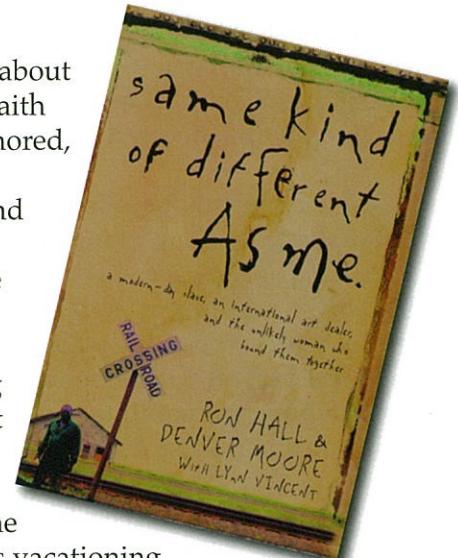
if you want to read about lives transformed, faith confirmed, God honored, and miracles truly wrought. Denver and Ron's friendship is nothing short of the miraculous...and the Lord has used Deborah's suffering to bring about great fruit.

I caught up with Ron Hall on the phone while he was vacationing in Nantucket recently and he graciously gave us his time. What follows are bits and pieces of that conversation

Q: I knew that you and Debbie had been to family camp with Don Anderson but did not realize that you had so many connections with BTR.

Ron: We got to know Don even before he started having camps at Trail West. We met him at the Colonial Cafeteria in Fort Worth in 1975 for a couples Bible study. Several families in Fort Worth got the idea of having some sort of family camp in Colorado and we contacted Don to do that in 1980. Debbie and I were even baptized at Trail West. We went two or three years in a row. We had been to Kaleo, too. [Scott and Janina] Walker were with us through the whole experience [of the book]. Pat and Cindy Hawkins are good friends—I am the godfather of one of their children. We were living in a house belonging to Clyde and Kathy Womack when Deb found out she had cancer.

Q: Those are lots of connections. We noticed you are speaking at a fundraiser for Four Rivers Outreach of Sherman that our board member Larry Watkins is affiliated with, too. Your schedule looks pretty full.



Ron: It is but not as full as it has been. I figure Denver and I have spoken at over 600 events—sometimes 180 a year. Three years ago we spoke at eleven fundraisers in eight cities over a period of seven days. We started in Midland and ended in Atlanta. Denver and I looked at each other in the middle of all that and said, “If we survive this, we can’t ever do that again.” We’ve let our schedules slow down purposely.

Q: Is Denver still making speaking appearances?

Ron: No, he is not. He has been in and out of the hospital over the last two and a half months. We’re trying to keep him going. He jokes that he never had any health problems till he moved in with me. Too much good living, he says!

Q: Is Denver still painting?

Ron: Yes, we are working on a children’s version of *Same Kind of Different As Me*. It’s going to be filled with Denver’s paintings as illustrations. I’ve had to help him with some of the paintings for the book though. We hope it will be out by Christmas. Denver has sold a bunch of paintings—300 or 400. He is not painting as much these days, given his health issues.

Q: Besides the children’s book, you have the new book out, *What Difference Do It Make?* Can you tell me about that?

Ron: First of all, we’ve also developed some materials to use with the first book—interactive curriculum on DVD to facilitate the book’s use with groups, book clubs, churches, Sunday school classes. The second book contains more of Denver’s and my story and fills in some gaps. One chapter concerns my reconciliation with my father. And much of the book is devoted to what others are doing. Thousands of people have written or emailed to tell us of what they’ve been inspired to do for the homeless because of the first book. We selected some 500 of these. The publisher, Thomas Nelson, chose a variety--around 15-20--to highlight in the second book. The second book has not made the *New York Times* bestseller list but it has made Christian books bestseller lists.

Q: Anything else?

Ron: Yes, I am working on a book tentatively called *The Poopsie Chronicles*, but the publisher may change that. We’ve named it after a Jewish friend who started us in the art business by selling the first painting. He took a painting to sell for me, disappeared for 45 days, and resurfaced at the eleventh hour with cash. That was my start in the art business.

[Editor’s note: the story of how Ron got started as an art dealer is told briefly in *Same Kind of Different* and makes for great reading.]

Q: In *Same Kind of Different*, Denver mentions his desire to “carry Miss Debbie’s torch” in serving the underserved. What does that look like for you both these days?

Ron: Some of the best times I have are when I am going to these different cities. The day before I speak, I try to get out on the streets and hear the stories of the people we are there to raise money for. The stories are amazing, and often the homeless are cynical. They tell me how people come every day with Bible verses, sandwiches, cups of coffee, a dollar or two. People say, “Jesus loves you. God bless you.” And they don’t come back. Debbie was resolved we were going to stick with it and let the homeless see that God loves them. We would love them through it till they were strong enough to get back on their feet. I don’t recommend everyone doing what I did and moving a homeless person into your home. I feared for my life at first. Many have problems with addiction. But there are ways to feed them and to not give up on them.

Denver’s idea is for every church to take in one homeless person. He preached this across the U.S. He has had few takers. Cities across America have ten year plans to eliminate homelessness. Denver’s is simpler: every church should take one and provide housing and love, meeting the needs of one homeless person. That would eliminate homelessness.

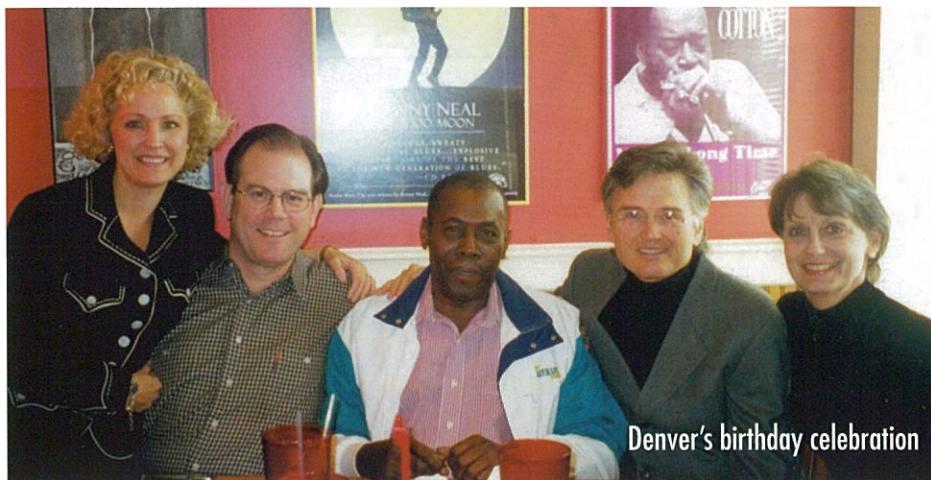
Q: Proceeds from the first book benefitted the Union Gospel Mission?

Ron: Yes, my royalties went to the UGM the first 3 ½ years after the book’s release. Now they have no debt; they have completed their building programs and are in pretty good shape. Denver has gotten his royalties all along and has given to whomever he wanted. He has helped build houses, taken care of kids on the street. He keeps silent about it. He does not want a lot of recognition.

Q: Are you still involved in the art business?

Ron: Right now, fundraising for the homeless is pretty much my life. [My son] Carson took over the art business. Denver was doing fundraisers on behalf of the homeless until his health failed. I will continue. I don’t know what God has in mind for me. I probably need to get back into the art business to earn some money.

Q: Speaking of money, has the current economy adversely affected the homeless, from your perspective?



Denver's birthday celebration

Ron: Of course. The homeless shelters have more customers than ever. More families. This has made a difference—stretching the budgets of shelters. It has been difficult for donors to continue giving at previous levels. We get lots of requests to do fundraisers for missions.

Q: A movie is planned for *Same Kind of Different*. Any updates on that?

Ron: Yes, there is a movie. We had more than 20 inquiries from screenwriters and signed a contract with Mark Clayman, producer of the *Pursuit of Happyness*. The screenplay is finished and Samuel L. Jackson will be playing the role of Denver. We have a good director, things are on schedule. I have meetings all day [the next week] concerning the film. There are many parts to making a picture. The film won't portray things sequentially; there will be flashbacks in the storytelling. It won't be a "Christian film," but it will be a film that honors God and Christ.

Ron doesn't know who might be slated to play him in the film and he doesn't seem to care much, as long as the film helps to further carry "Debbie's torch." A Broadway play is even in the works. He says optimistically, "Between the Broadway play and the movie, the story will be told." This summer, Debbie would have celebrated her 65th birthday. When asked about losing Deb, Ron admits, "You never get over it. But it certainly helps to see the success of our book in honoring her through her story. America and the world have embraced her story and seen it has made a difference." He continues with the following:

What I want to emphasize about our story is that I get way too much credit. People think I've done something great by taking in a homeless man and letting him live with us for nine years. Our story is really that of Debbie's Christlike forgiveness in the wake of my infidelity. Apart

from that we have no story. There would be nothing else to write about apart from a failed marriage. This is Debbie's story. She was a godly woman and magnificent person who deserved accolades. Her final words to me were, "Don't give up on Denver. God will bless your friendship." She also said, "Don't name anything after me." She gave me a job to do. And I'm thankful Denver did not give up on me. I wanted accountability and responsibility from a man who had never heard those words. It was not easy on him, either.

Ironically, Christian bookstores did not immediately embrace *Same Kind of Different*, according to Ron, who admits it is not a "mainstream" Christian book and mentions that some critics have faulted the book because it contains no clear explanation of how to accept Christ. Yet the work, which is very much Christian in context and worldview, has sold over a million copies. Ron and Denver have been invited to speak before Muslim and Jewish groups in the U.S. and abroad. Doors have been opened. In chapter 50 of *Same Kind of Different*, Ron recounts the dramatic last visit paid by his Jewish business partner from New York to Deborah during her final days. The partner is now a messianic Jew, his life transformed by Christ through that experience.

When he is not speaking or writing or working on the details of movies and plays, Ron enjoys spending time with his three little granddaughters who call him Rocky Pop, a play on words suggested by the name of the Hall ranch, Rocky Top. Rocky Top, nestled on the banks of the Brazos, also serves as Deborah Hall's final resting place where a family cemetery now solemnly adorns the high ground of the land which will remain in the Hall family in perpetuity. The principle of Deborah's life is not unlike that articulated by Jesus in John 12:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (NASB). Deborah Hall's suffering and homegoing have occasioned the bearing of much fruit for the cause of Christ and the plight of the homeless. Ron and Denver's story is very much Debbie's story. Although Ron would deflect any praise from himself, it is also clear that much credit belongs to two men who chose to embrace the unlikeliest of friendships and to make themselves available to God for His work and His glory.

For more information on Ron and Denver, visit www.samekindofdifferentasme.com.

Bible Teaching Resources FAX

Inventory Clearance!!!

Nearly free! In the process of "fall cleaning," we have found VHS sets of Don's marriage series which we would like to make available to our readers for our shipping costs. You can order as many as you like at these prices (as long as supplies last). Get a VHS set for yourself, your adult children, your church library, a friend, your pastor and / or Bible study group.

VHS920 *Breaking Barriers to Intimacy*

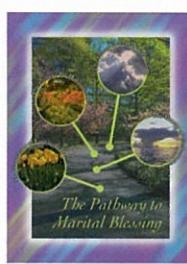
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VHS900 *The Pathway to Marital Blessing*

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(VHS series original cost: \$60.00)



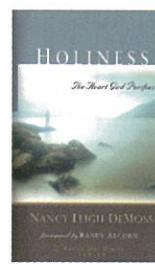
CD201plus *Abraham and anniversary tote*

We also have several sets of Don's messages on Abraham, recorded at Cannon Beach Conference Center along with an anniversary tote bag. Receive this timeless CD series along with the bag for our shipping cost of \$3.55. Original cost: \$30.00

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The following books by some of Don's favorite authors are now available from us at reduced prices, as long as supplies last.

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Quantities of all products are limited so hurry and order today! These prices are valid for shipment within the continental US only. See order form on page 10.

RECIPE CORNER

Donna's Delights

Thanks to Donna Anderson Skorheim for this quick and tasty salad idea.

ORIENTAL COLESLAW

1 16 oz. pkg. coleslaw mix
2 packages chicken flavored ramen noodles (crumbled up & uncooked)
2 bunches of chopped green onions
1 cup slivered almonds (toasted)
1 cup sunflower seeds (shelled)

Dressing: 1 cup light olive oil, 1/3 cup white vinegar, 1/2 cup sugar, and 2 seasoning packets from ramen noodles. Refrigerate dressing at least 3 hours before mixing with coleslaw mix. Mix dressing, coleslaw mix, and other ingredients listed above right before serving. Enjoy!



Pearl's Reflections

by Pearl Anderson

At the time of the writing of this article, the Texas Rangers are in first place in the American League West division. Now they are "our Rangers." Just let them lose several games and they will become "those Rangers."

We have been fortunate during our lifetimes to live in a "Christian nation." Even those who were not "Christ's ones" respected and supported the Christian faith and lifestyle.

There has been a definite change in attitude this past generation.

Our heroes now are those in grade school, junior high, high school, college, homes, and the workplace who come through with their Christian faith intact.

We can learn how to *keep the faith* by studying how the Apostle Paul encouraged his young friend Timothy, as this paraphrase of 2 Timothy 1 reveals:

Timothy, my dear son, I thank God for you. I know that you sincerely trust the Lord.

This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you. God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. Never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer for the proclamation of the Good News.

It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. Not because we deserved it, but because it was His plan—to show His love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus. Now He has made all this plain to us by the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who broke the power of death and showed us the way to everlasting life through the Good News. Hold on to the pattern of right teaching and remember to live in the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives within us, carefully guard what has been entrusted to you. May the Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all, Paul

For the "rest of the letter," read the next three chapters.

I hope you realize we are in a war. Past wars and military action have taken place in other countries. This war is here among us. This engagement concerns freedom of speech and religion, democracy, constitutional rule of law...our very way of life.

We cannot sit on the sidelines of this conflict and simply watch. If we do we are going to see, or our children and grandchildren will experience, a holocaust equal to or worse than anything experienced in history.

A placard held up recently and publicly by Islamic extremists proclaimed that Islam will dominate the world. Dust off your history books and read about the early jihads. Is there any similarity between the modus operandi of the Islamic planned conquests then and now?

Unlike interest in the Texas Rangers, may our love for God and America never wane. The constant hacking at our foundations by the pseudo-intellectuals, scientists, politicians, and religionists saddens and angers me.

I cried when I read that Benjamin Netanyahu, prime minister of Israel, was required to enter the White House by the service entrance.

The withdrawal of the invitation for Franklin Graham to address the Washington prayer breakfast—a concerted effort to remove the cross, the name God and Jesus from public and private life--was a disgrace. Instead, swearing and using the name of Jesus lightly seem to be approved behavior amongst our cultural elite.

The urgency of our prayers should be similar to that of Daniel in Daniel 9:19: "O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name" (NIV).

Lord, hasten the day of Your kingdom: "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready'" (Rev. 19:6-7 NASB).

Please pray for:

1. Leaders who respect God and our country.
2. Conservative political groups—protection, courage, wisdom
3. Financial support to qualified candidates for political offices
4. That we will get back to our roots—one nation *under God*.

God bless America!
It's still **OUR** country
no matter what!



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The Poor Among Us

by Marvin Williams



Francis Chan, in his book *Crazy Love*, tells of a family with an interesting Christmas tradition. On Christmas morning, the Robynson family doesn't focus on opening presents under the Christmas tree. Instead, they make pancakes and coffee, and serve the breakfast to the homeless. This is a small but creative way to show God's love and generosity to the poor.

God expected this kind of generosity from His people. In Deuteronomy 15, Moses emphasized the reality of poverty and how the more affluent must deal with it. They were warned of four dangers:

A hard heart, ignoring the needs of the poor (v.7).

A closed hand, withholding what the poor lacked (v.7).

An evil thought, hesitating or refusing to loan money to the poor because the year of canceling debts was nearing (v.9).

A grudging spirit, a reluctance to satisfy the needs of the poor among them (v.10). Not only were they warned about selfishness, but more important, they were encouraged to be spontaneously generous (vv.8,10,11).

Among God's people, there must always be a spirit of generosity toward the poor. Let's open our hearts and our hands.

*One grace each child of God can show
Is giving from a willing heart;
Yet, if we wait till riches grow,
It well may be we'll never start.*

—D. De Haan

Generosity stems from the heart that has experienced God's grace.

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Mr. & Mrs. Richard F. George

Some of our favorite letters from the **mailbag**

- Thank you so much for sending the July-December *A Great While Before Day*. We do enjoy reading each day's message from both of you.
- Thank you for the daily scriptures. We love them.... Over the many years, the *Grapevine* has deepened our walk with Jesus.... I believe it was 1965 when I attended your luncheon class at the Blackstone Hotel [in Tyler, TX].... God has blessed us by bringing you into our lives.
- We think of you very often because we use the wonderful devotional books you produce. We do enjoy them very much.... Ken keeps busy doing editorial work on the NIV Bible and the NIV Study Bible. He also teaches a Sunday school class each



week. During the fall and spring he teaches two Lifeway courses.

- Thank you for the daily devotional. I had thought just the day before yesterday that it's close to the end of the devotional and I wondered if we will get another one, and sure enough, in yesterday's mail, here it came. I use it daily and want it to keep on coming.
- Your devotional has truly ministered to me daily, and sometimes the Word and your word are all that gets me through the day.
- I really enjoyed your Bible studies in Austin and Lubbock... You mentioned your surgeries. I've had [multiple] knee and hip replacements. Not much fun. But I bet both of us will enjoy heaven more than some people who never have an ache or pain.

A black and white photograph of a man sitting on a bench. He is wearing a dark hoodie, a red shirt underneath, blue jeans, and brown leather shoes. He is leaning forward with his head down, appearing to be in distress or deep thought. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

How Families Help the Homeless

We've all been there—standing on a street corner awaiting a light change or walking to an appointment—when a homeless person approaches and asks for money. What is the best thing to do? Ignore him? Pop in to the nearest McDonald's and return with food? Ron Hall advises, "If God puts it on your heart to respond, then give them money and don't judge them for what they do with it...that's God's job and you will receive the blessing." In the book *What Difference Do It Make?*, Ron Hall and Denver Moore recount dozens of stories in which ordinary people, inspired by the events of *Same Kind of Different As Me*, have been motivated to serve the homeless in tangible ways. The book will give you plenty of ideas about how you, too, can help.

Jesus reminds us that the poor will be with us, and that we honor Him when we help the helpless. Helping can become a family project. Ron and Denver's latest book contains many examples. So does the website published by The Volunteer Family (www.thevolunteerfamily.org). The website lists many reasons why people are forced into homelessness: unemployment, racism, poverty, alcoholism, lack of education, health issues, gambling, substance abuse, lack of credit, loss of friends or family, mental problems, foreclosure. Our nation's current high unemployment rate is only making the problems worse. According to The Volunteer Family, "Regardless of the reasons or circumstances that contribute, it is important to understand that there are many people in need of short-term emergency assistance and long-term sustainable solutions." Here is a list of ideas adapted from their website and specifically designed for families who wish to help. You can always write a check, but the key to making a lasting difference is to make your volunteering more than a one-time gesture. Be consistent and faithful; stay in it for the long haul and great things might just happen.

Can Help

- Locate local agencies devoted to helping the homeless and volunteer as needed
- Help serve food in a soup kitchen regularly
- Conduct canned food drives...inspect and sort canned food
- Collect clothing /hygiene supplies / toys / paper products/blankets to give to a shelter
- Cook casseroles to be served at shelters
- Make sandwiches and bag lunches for homeless children at a shelter
- Organize snacks for walkers during fundraising events
- Volunteer to teach computer or other job-building skills at a homeless shelter
- Make welcome baskets for new Habitat for Humanity homeowners
- Grow a vegetable garden and donate some of the food to a shelter...or work, plant, water, weed and / or harvest in a community garden
- Collect clothing for Goodwill...conduct toiletry, mitten, or book drives
- Collect art and school supplies for homeless children
- Sponsor a birthday party for a homeless child
- Have a meal or other benefit to raise money for a shelter
- Contact governmental leaders about the problems surrounding homelessness in your area
- Make fleece tie blankets and donate these to local shelters
- Adopt a family: give gifts anonymously or holiday gifts, have a friendship with them, have barbecues together
- Plan a meal, purchase ingredients, and prepare food for a small group of residents or a family in transitional housing

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a testimony of these things" (Net).

It is critical for us to accept our mortality and have a plan of procedure for the inevitable. Instead too many Christians panic and start splattering shot everywhere hoping to hit something. Even the wisdom of the world reveals that those who fail to plan, plan to fail. Henry David Thoreau put it well: "In the long run men hit only what they aim at." And in the words of the inimitable Yogi Berra: "If you don't know where you're going, you will wind up somewhere else."

When you find yourself late in the game of life, planning to make a fantastic finish, you must narrow everything down to that one thing that you want to do to help leave a legacy and to make the finish you desire. Your aim is to ultimately hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" from the Lord Himself. After 50, it's just a little late to be singing with Oscar Hammerstein: "Climb every mountain, ford every stream, Follow every rainbow, 'til you find your dream." As the great evangelist Billy Sunday put it: "More men fail through lack of purpose than through lack of talent." Kierkegaard said: "Purity of heart is to will one thing."

Remember the movie *City Slickers*? Billy Crystal plays a confused, dissatisfied thirty-something character with a vague sense that life is passing him by. Jack Palance asks Crystal if he would like to know the secret of life.

"It's this," Palance says, holding up a single finger.

"The secret of life is your finger?" asks Crystal.

"It's one thing," Palance replies. "The secret of life is pursuing one thing."

Vance Havner addresses this whole idea in a devotional entitled "Doing or Dabbling?"

PAUL DID ONE thing. Most of us dabble in forty things. Like butterflies we flit about looking into this and that but we are deeply concerned about nothing. We are like the Hollywood actress who said, "I'm interested in everything a little bit." All of Paul was going in one direction. His was not the sin of dissipated devotion. . . . Their energies are frittered in all directions. They aim at everything in general and hit nothing in particular. . . .

Many years ago when I was a dabbling young man, Dr. R. A. Torrey charged me to decide on one thing and stay with it. . . . Are you a doer or a dabbler?

continued on next page

I'm afraid many of us have to plead guilty of being dabblers rather than doers. May I suggest four strategies to assist you in developing a game plan for making a strong finish and leaving a legacy for the glory of God? The time is short. Our ground time will be brief. But how can we handle these challenges?

1. Accept reality

To do this we ask the question: How much time do I have left?

Here are several passages of scripture about how to accept reality.

Psalm 90:12, 17: "So teach us to consider our mortality, so that we might live wisely. . . . May our sovereign God extend his favor to us! Make our endeavors successful! Yes, make them successful!" (Net).

Psalm 119:37: "Turn my eyes away from what is worthless! Revive me with your assuring word!" (Net).

Psalm 118:24: "This is the day the Lord has brought about. We will be happy and rejoice in it" (Net).

James 4:13-17: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into this or that town and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.' You do not know about tomorrow. What is your life like? For you are a puff of smoke that appears for a short time and then vanishes. You ought to say instead, 'If the Lord is willing, then we will live and do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows what is good to do and does not do it is guilty of sin" (Net).

How old are you now? Take your current age; how many years before you reach 80? The latest US Census figures suggest that the average life expectancy for men is 75.6; women, 80.6. The psalmist writes in Psalm 90:10: "The days of our lives add up to seventy years, or eighty, if one is especially strong" (Net). So—just to get started and keeping in mind that medical advances are extending life expectancy--take 80 and move back to where you are at the present time. For me, since I am 77, I may have three years left. That's reality. Many reading this have already exceeded 80. I would suggest to you that the maintenance contract runs out at 80 and everything else that you get after that is grace. Living on grace should fill us with gratitude and thankfulness that God still has some use for us down here before He makes the call to come home.

2. Make a list

What are the things that you want to accomplish before the time of your departure? Write them down. Paul beautifully describes his "bucket list" in Philippians 3:10-11: "My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Net).

Isaiah 49:4: "But I said, 'I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God'" (NIV). For Winston Churchill in World War II, the list contained one word: "Victory." What is on your list?

3. Choose one item from the list.

Now you are focused. Philippians 3:13-14: "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead, with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Net).

The New American Standard Bible translates this phrase: "but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead."

Remember when Jesus in Luke 10 tells Martha she is distracted with all of her preparations? The Lord says: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (NASB). Like Mary, choose the good part.

Psalm 27:4: "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple" (NIV).

What is that one thing that the Lord desires to accomplish through you, ensuring a fantastic finish? Discover this and focus on its full accomplishment. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in *Letters and Papers from Prison*: "The essence of chastity is not the suppression of lust, but the total orientation of one's life toward a goal."

To be focused is to be single-minded and determined. I zero in on the one thing. I am fine tuned. I am taking aim. This means doing something that you have always wanted to achieve. Get organized to achieve a particular goal. A dictionary definition of *focus* as an adjective is this: "concentrated, concentrated on a single thing, single-

minded, single-minded and determined."

4. Persevere

Hebrews 12:1-2: "Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy lying before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (DAV).

Romans 15:5: "Now may the God of perseverance and encouragement give to you to be thinking the same thing with one another according to Christ Jesus" (DAV).

1 Corinthians 9:24-27: "Are you not knowing that those who are running in a race are indeed all running, but one is receiving the prize? Be running in such a manner in order that you may win. Now everyone who is engaging in the contest is exercising self-control in all things. Those, to be sure, in order that they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. As for myself, therefore, I am running that way, not aimlessly, as one who has no fixed goal; I am boxing that way, not as one who is punching the air. But I am treating my body roughly and making it serve me, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified" (DAV).

The New Living Translation of the phrase in 1 Corinthians 9:26: "So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step."

Peterson paraphrases it in *The Message*: "I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got."

Dame Margot Fonteyn makes this statement that hangs in my office: "The runner who puts the last ounce of effort into the race, feels the glorious satisfaction of having given everything to the moment."

We start by facing the reality that our ground time is brief. I love the picture in Isaiah 40:11: "Like a shepherd he tends his flock; he gathers up the lambs with his arm; he carries them close to his chest; he leads the ewes along" (Net). So it will be with all who call Jesus Lord. In the meantime, as one of our camp cooks used to put it, "Sittin' ain't gonna get it done." Lord, grant that whatever we may need to lay aside to fulfill Your will may not be seen as a sacrifice, but rather as the pathway to true achievement.

This Fall: Catch Don via Webcast

Live BTR Bible studies are now available in your home via webcasting, no matter where you are located, provided you have the following:

- A. High-speed internet (DSL) connection and
- B. A reasonably new computer (PC or desktop)

Don taught Revelation via webcast last spring; response was positive. Beginning on September 20, he will be teaching Revelation on Monday nights and Galatians on Thursday nights. Both classes will be available on webcast.

- To log in and catch Don's live study, do the following: Go to http://myflock.com/cgi-bin/streaming_page.pl?churchid=church3261
- Then, click on the "Launch Streaming Service Window" button on the middle of the page. A new page will open asking you to "Enter a Desired Nickname."
- Just enter your name and click on the "Enter Live Service" button. At this point you are connected to the live class and should be viewing and hearing the live class. The class should be available at approximately 6:50 p.m. on Monday and Thursday nights.
- To enlarge Don's broadcast to full screen on your PC, click on the bullseye in the lower right corner below Don. Use the ESC key to return to the BTR Live Service screen, where you can click on "Notes" to see study notes or click on "Chat Room" for comments and questions. There you can submit your own comments or questions for Don.
- Use the print icon to print out the study notes, if you like.

If you have a large Bible study audience of friends and neighbors, you might want to connect your PC to your TV or video-projector by using a SVGA cable.

If Monday or Thursday evenings don't fit into your schedule, we will be saving copies of the Bible studies and adding them to a media vault.

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Fall Tour 2010

(CLASS CURRICULUM LISTED BELOW)
September 20-October 28, 2010

**MONDAY - September 20 & 27, October 4, 11,
18 & 25 (VIDEOCONFERENCE)**

6 Week study in Galatians

12:20 p.m.—**Fr. WORTH BUSINESSPEOPLES NOON CLASS**
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 10th & Lamar
Ft. Worth, TX 76102

Class host:

Garner Roberts, office: 817.763.5831
(Lunch available at 11:50 a.m.)

**MONDAY - September 20 & 27, October 4, 11,
18 & 25 (LIVE & WEBCAST)**

6 week study in Revelation

7:00 p.m.—**TYLER EVENING CLASS**
Prothro, Wilhelmi & Company
6855 Oak Hill Blvd
Tyler, TX 75703
Class hosts:
Walter & Ashley Wilhelmi, office: 903.534.8811

**TUESDAY - September 21 & 28, October 5, 12,
19 & 26 (VIDEOCONFERENCE)**

6 week study in Galatians

7:00 P.M. —**DALLAS EVENING CLASS**
Brookhaven Church, 13000 Marsh Lane
Dallas, TX 75234
Class hosts:
Gary & Sydney Smith, cell: 972.322.9050

**WEDNESDAY - September 22 & 29, October 6,
13, 20 & 27 (VIDEOCONFERENCE)**

6 week study in Galatians

12:00 P.M. —**SHERMAN NOON CLASS**
Sherman Bible Church, 2515 W Lamberth Road
Sherman, TX 75092
Class host:
Larry Watkins, office: 903.868.1623
Tommy Hudspeth, home: 903.893.7603

**THURSDAY - September 23 & 30, October 7,
14, 21 & 28 (LIVE & WEBCAST)**

6 week study in Galatians

7:00 p.m.—**HIDE-A-WAY LAKE EVENING CLASS (BY
INVITATION ONLY)**
243 Winged Foot
Hideaway, TX 75771
Class hosts:
Barry & Lina Acker, home: 903.882.9110